

Andrew Jackson to James Craine Bronaugh, February 12, 1820, from Correspondence of Andrew Jackson. Edited by John Spencer Bassett.

TO DR. JAMES C. BRONAUGH.¹

¹ See vol. II., p. 304, note 8. Dr. Bronaugh was in Washington when this letter was written.

Hermitage, February 12, 1820.

Your favour of the 21st of January is Just to hand, and I sincerely thank you for the Trouble you have taken to discover the declarations, and slander of that subtle fiend Colo. John Williams;² as to any of his opinions relative to me as a military man, I care not, as I know amongst military men who know him, his opinions on military matters can have no weight, and being content myself with the plans and execution thereof through my military career, nothing that such a man could say could have any effect on my feelings—so long as he would confine himself to my public conduct generally—but when he would attempt to insinuate any thing relative to my private and moral charector or any particular act of mine as a military man I will punish him. he has I know, in dark innuendoes and secrete and confidential information endeavoured to injure me in congress. My reasons for making the request of you I did, and troubling you with this disagreeable business, was to obtain certain proof of some charge he had made against me so that I might have proof, believing from what I know of him, that he would deny any thing to shield himself from punishment or danger. perhaps when you see Mr. King,³ he can give you some direct information. I wish you if you please to have some conversation with him on the subject of Colo. Williams communication relative to the Salt lick—after which I do not wish you to

² See vol. II., p. 88, note. Colonel Williams was U. S. senator from Tennessee 1815–1823.

Library of Congress

3 Evidently Rufus King, senator from New York, who had in charge Jackson's defense against Lacock's resolutions.

trouble yourself further, unless, you find something, that would enable me to make a direct call on him. I have waited with some solicitude to see my answer before the senate, but the reasons for delay, are sufficient. The spanish treaty will not be ratified, the course Congress has persued, is well calculated to prevent it. Had congress acted with that promptness, feeling, and energy that the subject required, and our national charector demanded, the Don long since, cap in hand, would have paid his respects to our President, with the treaty ratified, and an humble request that it might be received. But spain has taken courage from the feeble and disgracefull course that Congress has pursued, and Capt Gadsden writes me from orleans that reenforcements from cuba has sailed for Pensacola, that the Governor of Pensacola is streng[t]hening the Barrancas, and has erected a redoubt on the portion we occupied with our nine pound battery. This clearly shews that spain does not intend to ratify the treaty, or would she strengthen the fortifications to deliver them to us, or be at the expence of sending Troops to reenforce her garrisons, for the purpose of incurring a useless expence, no; we therefore will have to take them by force, and every week adds strength to our enemy, and will add to the blood and Treasure it will cost us to Possess the Floridas.

I have been called on for a plan of campaign calculated to be carried on by the regulars alone, and to prevent the necessity of a call for aid from the militia. believing as I did, that Spain would reenforce her garrisons, excite the Indians and negroes to war and seduce them to Join her standard I recommended a concentration of our force at Ft Montgomery (except the 7th Regt. who are to be left at Ft Scott, to overaw the Indians and cover Ft Gadsden and the Georgia Frontier) march for and reduce Pensacola and the Barancas, with the same Transports sail the appelachicola Bay, land such part of our Troops as would be sufficient in conjunction with the 7th Regt to march for and invest St Marks by land, the others sail for the Bay of St Johns, and invest it by water, reduce it, which would secure our rear and the Frontier of Georgia, whilst the Barrancas would give us

Library of Congress

security to the mobile and orleans and our frontier in that quarter. Then with our combined force invest St Augustine and reduce it. Thus by reducing them in detail no disaster could befall us, when if we were to attempt to make a simultaneous attack on Barrancas and St Augustine, reenforcements might be sent to St Augustine, which with the force there, the Indians, and negroes excited and supplied at St. Marks an attack might be made in the rear and the Troops investing the place destroyed and our frontier deluged with blood before I could reduce the Barrancas and aid them. The 7th Regt. would not be of sufficient strength to march into the seminole country and hold the Indians in check, without much hazzard. Therefore if active operations is ordered my plan of campaign adopted, Mobile will be the rendezvous for our Transports to which point the stores etc. etc. etc. for your department ought to be ordered. If my plan is not adopted, the sec of war will direct one himself, of which he can inform you. I can with the 4th and Eight, take Barrancas, if not reenforced—if reenforced it would take the aid of the 7th. by my plan we are persuing a course calculating from our own resources on victory, without the aid of the militia. by dividing our force, should the enemy be reenforced, we hazzard defeat and disgrace, and on that event a certain call for the militia on my plan we secure orleans and mobile from attack, place the frontiers of Georgia in security and reduce the Garrison in detail. be assured St Marks and St Augustine if well defended will cost us many lives, some time, and a great deal of powder. it is their situation, added to their strength, that will make the difficulty in reducing them. The Barancas has dry ground for us to approch it, the others swamps and marshes. I would to god Mr. Mercer⁴ was before St Marks to make us a good dry encampment below it, which he said in his speech on the seminole question I might have easily done. however if Congress orders it to be Possessed, we will have it, without militia aid, or perish.

4 Charles Fenton Mercer, M. C. from Virginia 1819–1839.

your medical supply you will please to order to orleans to be transported with the Troops and other supplies from there, if laid in at the north, you can order them with the troops

Library of Congress

from that section destined to form a Junction with me at mobile bay, provided my plan is adopted.

Give my compliments to Colo. Gibson and Easter if with you, and let me hear from you shortly. Mrs. J. Joins me in good wishes for your health and happiness present me to Mr. Munroe, lady, and family affectionately

I am D'r Sir Sincerely yrs